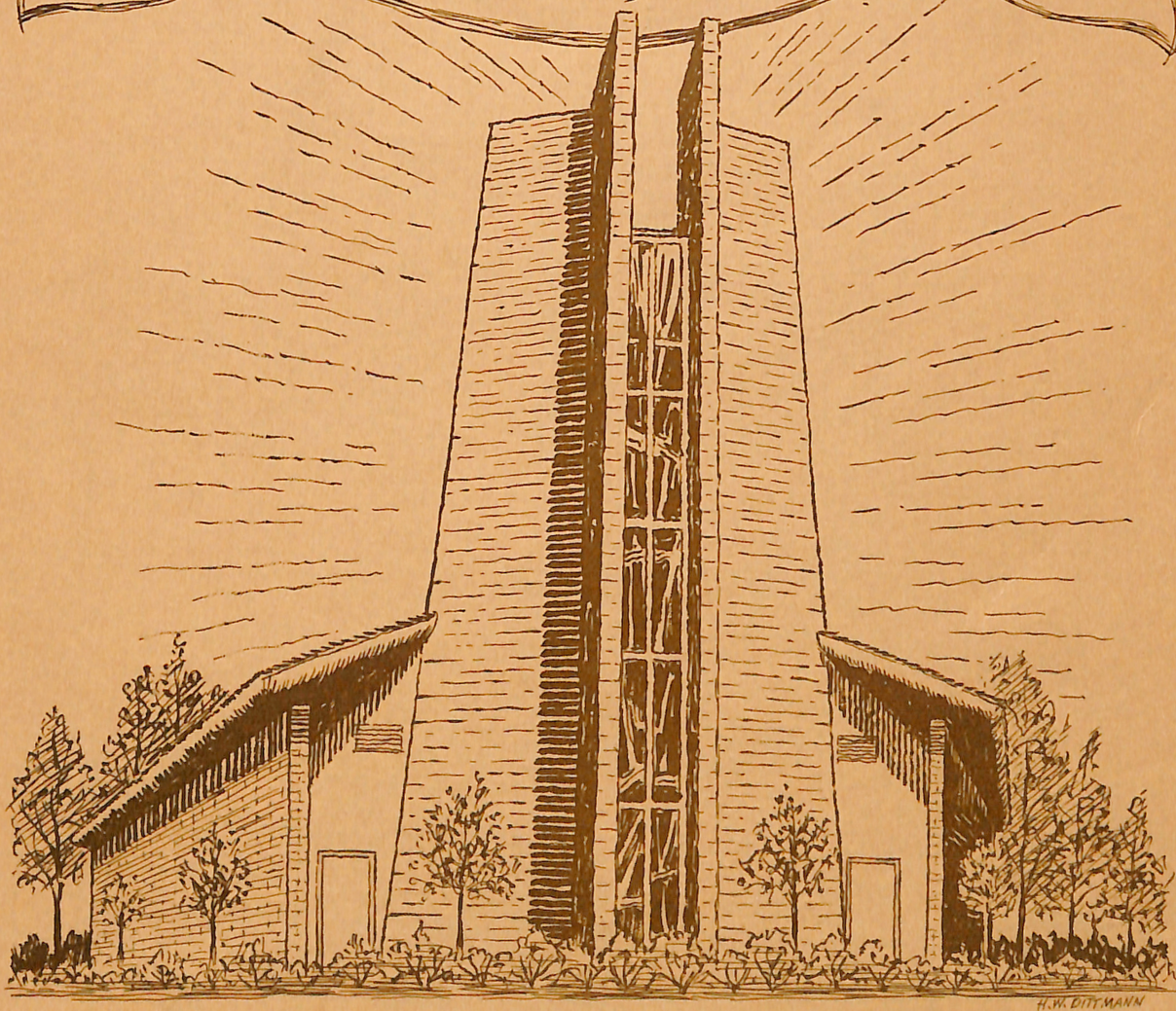
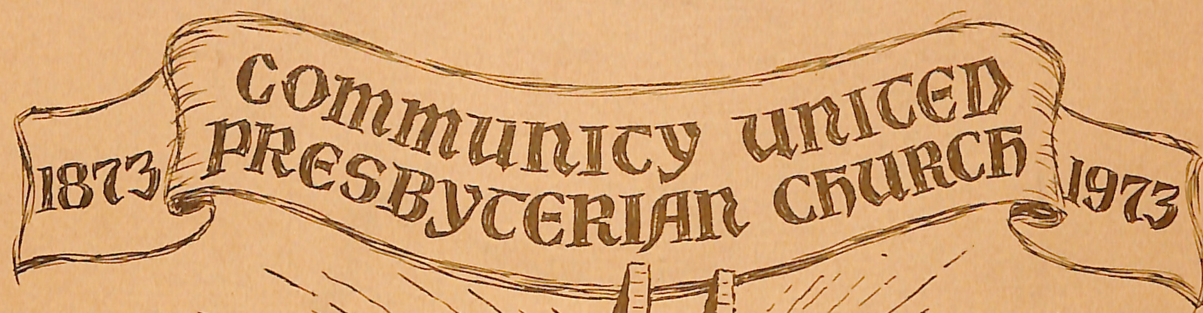




CENTENNIAL SUNDAY

APRIL 29, 1973 + MAY 6, 1973

ELDRIDGE & HEMLOCK • VACAVILLE • CA •

Formed 1873 • Present Building Erected 1963

LEO O. NELSON, Pastor

CAROL EVANS • DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

HISTORY

of the

Vacaville United Presbyterian Church

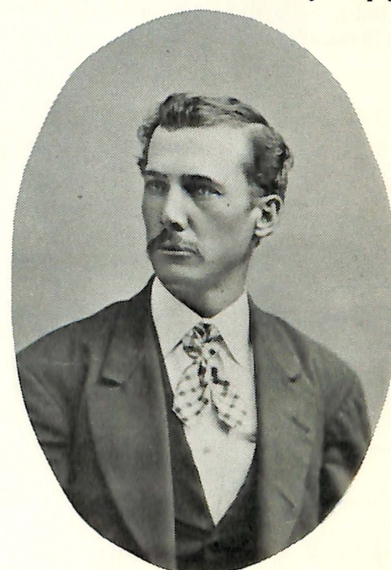
The specific reasons and motivation that move an individual or group of people to organize and establish a Christian Church normally escape the searchings of the historian. So it is at least as pertains to our United Presbyterian Church of Vacaville. We can only presume that a small group of people felt a great need and longing for a means and a place to practice the worship and discipleship of Jesus Christ as they understood and believed. We can also presume that it was not an emotional spontaneous gesture — there is far too much evidence of thought and planning of arrangements for that to have been the case. We do not know what or who the catalyst was that united those 22 already God-fearing Christians into such a single element. We do have available an entry in the diary of James C. Weir, the father of Marion Vaile and grandfather of Walter Weir that states very simply: "Organized a Presbyterian Church at this place today."

Most of the historic data of which this brochure is composed is direct extracts from newspaper articles that intermittently reported and recorded the more significant events of the life and development of our Church. The Sessional records of our Church were destroyed by fire in 1877.

This Church was organized originally as the First Presbyterian Church of Vacaville on July 12, 1873. There will be two name changes for our Church that will unfold later in this document. Officiating at the birth of our Church was The Rev. Thomas Frazier, Synodical Missionary of the Synod of the Pacific, Benicia Presbytery. The Pacific Synod extended from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and from the Mexican to Canadian borders. California historians will remember that Benicia was the State Capitol for a brief period and that the first Presbyterian Church constructed in California was in that city.

There were 22 charter members of our Church as follows: David Creighton, wife and three daughters; Mr. and Mrs. George Brown; Mr. and Mrs. Thurston; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Eversele; Mr. and Mrs. O.J. Bingham; Mrs. Charley Loomis; Mrs. Coburn Farmer; Mrs. Laura Davis; Mrs. Fascett; Mrs. Cynthia Merchant; Miss Gorman; Mr. Robert Simpson; Mr. J.B. Robinson; and Mr. James C. Weir.

Worship services were held in the Methodist Church for several months. The original Ruling Elders of our Church were Robert Simpson, O.J. Bingham, and J.B. Robinson with Henry Eversole as Sunday School Superintendent.



James C. Weir

Articles of Incorporation of the First Presbyterian Church of Vacaville, Solano County were:

Article 1. That the name of the Corporation is the First Presbyterian Church of Vacaville.

Article 2. That the purpose for which it is formed is the promulgation of the Gospel, according to the usages of the Presbyterian Church of the United States.

Article 3. The place where its principal business is to be transacted is Vacaville, Solano County.

Article 4. The term for which it is to exist is fifty years.

Article 5. The number of Directors of Trustees is five. Adopted as read Twelfth day of June, 1874.

For the first several months, the pulpit supply came primarily from the San Francisco Seminary (subsequently relocated to its present site at San Anselmo.)

During 1876, the Reverend A. J. Compton was called as the first regular minister of our Church. Mr. Compton had suffered a severe stoning by natives of Mexico at his previous mission assignment. The first church building owned by our Church was purchased from the Christian Church which had also served as the Vacaville High School for an undetermined period. That structure was moved to a lot on the corner of what is now Wilson and East Main Streets. This structure suffered a fire just a year later (1877) which destroyed all the Minutes of Session to that date. Subsequent to that date, still another fire in 1891 destroyed the entire building. Mr. Compton remained until 1879 when the pulpit supply again came from the San Francisco Seminary until a graduate student, Mr. Robert Ballagh was called and served until the Spring of 1882.

Records of that period are sketchy, but our Church did continue to grow and struggle with the problems of the day. The following resolution gives rise to the suspicion that a generation gap existed even between our great grandparents and their children:

"When candidates apply for membership hereafter, it shall be the imperative duty of Session to make diligent inquiry by direct question if the candidate has been in the habit of dancing and if they propose to continue in the habit, and if they answer in the affirmative they are to be informed immediately that no such person will be received into the communion until after a total renunciation of that sin."

It is further recorded that "this made some of the younger members unhappy as they could see no harm in dancing. They had been permitted to dance in their former Church."

The Reverend John D. Beard from Illinois replaced Robert Ballagh (1882-1887). He is described as a man along in years with a wife and four children and as being "a sincere, earnest minister." An incident of that period establishes that he and the Session wrestled with still another social problem as follows:

"At this time, theatrical amusements were considered too worldly for church members. Prof. H. Stilson, new principal of the College, from the Bedford Presbyterian Church, State of Indiana, presented his letter for membership. It was objected that Dr. Stilson had been instrumental in introducing theatrical amusements, and himself one of the principal actors to the College. Many of the plays or characters in the plays being said of an offensive if not immoral character. Even though Dr. Stilson was a deacon in his former Church, the elders would not receive his letter."

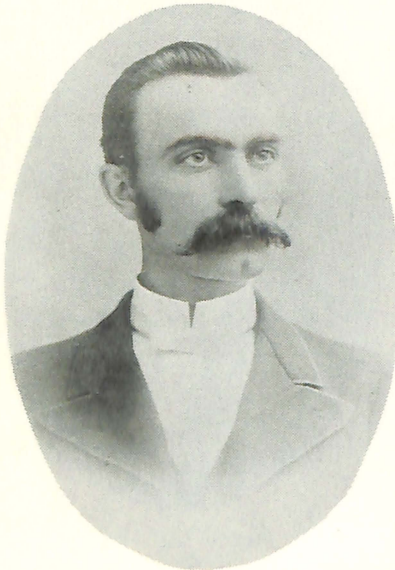
The feelings were so strong over the moral issues of dancing that several persons withdrew their membership and affiliated with a Congregationalist Church that was being established at that time. The details of events that followed are not recorded, but it is established that at least most of those who withdrew eventually returned.

That period (1882-1888) of wrestling with the problems of maintaining a hard line against the intrusion of permissiveness into our Church had an adverse impact upon the progress and growth as is evidenced by the following extract from the records of that period:

"In 1888, The Reverend F.J. Edmunds from Kansas took up the work and remained for two years. The Church was in a very precarious condition at that time. In the Fall of 1890, Presbytery met here, granting leave again to supply the pulpit. The Theological Seminary had been removed to San Anselmo from which several young men came up at the week-ends to fill the pulpit."

The exact nature of the inspiration or motivation that in 1890 provided the dramatic reversal of the downward trend of the health of our Church seems to hinge around the abilities of Mr. Donald M. Ross. The following extract very simply, but eloquently provides the basis for that conclusion:

"Finally, Mr. Donald M. Ross, a seminary student, came to stay until Spring vacation. Then something had to be done or let the Church go down as the Church was in debt \$65.00 and Mr. Ross could not be paid. If there were no services, the debt could not be paid, so the elders offered Mr. Ross \$30.00 to start with. Mr. Ross replied, "If you will give me enough to finish my course in the Seminary, I will stay."



The Reverend Donald Ross
Minister 1890-92

From that time, Elder James Weir and Mrs. Weir (Walter Weir's grandparents) took Mr. Ross in as one of the family and he lived there for some time. The Weir's and others of the congregation, as was the custom of the time, fed and lodged the various young student ministers as the pay was so small.

The elders decision was to be proven sound. Mr. Ross was soon receiving much more than the \$30 a month salary. In fact, after the church building was burned to the ground in 1891, a new lot at Main and Parker was purchased. A new Church was built and then dedicated. The Rev. Donald M. Ross completed his Seminary work. In the fall of 1892, Rev. Ross took as his bride, Miss Dutton, church organist. They then went on to a new pastorate in San Francisco.

A complete account of the dedication of the new church follows:

THE REPORTER, February 25, 1892 NEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"Sunday morning saw the new Presbyterian Church thrown open for the first time, and the seating capacity was taxed to its utmost, at least four hundred witnessing the dedicatory services. These were conducted by the Reverend McDonald of Santa Rosa, and the pastor, The Reverend Donald Ross, assisted by The Reverends J.E. Denton, H.E. Jewett, and S.A. Keatch, who were present with their respective congregations. The services lasted from 11 o'clock until 1 o'clock.

"It is a remarkable circumstance, as was said in Mr. Ross' remarks that morning, that two church buildings (referring to the Presbyterian and Christian) should be built simultaneously by one community. That it is a fact speaks volumes for each and every contributor.



Early photo of church at Parker & Main Streets just after steeple caught fire

(Sunday, July 11, 1909)

"To say that the building is an ornament to this section is to rehearse the individual and general sentiment of all. Architecturally it has been well planned, the steeple and roof adding much to the effect of size. A change in the entrance will be made, however, and an ornamental portico of some size be added. The grounds have yet to be planted and walks laid and electric lights and a bell put in. Nothing will be spared to make the open-air portions all that could be asked.



Old church sanctuary decorated for Easter Service Circa 1895
(Note chairs behind pulpit that are now in the choir loft)

"Comfortable would express the main idea of the interior arrangements. There is a large auditorium, seated with two hundred opera chairs; the room is comfortably carpeted, and finished off in plaster with mahogany wainscoting. The ceiling is arched and very high. A large chandelier is one of the main features. An expensive walnut pulpit set upholstered in dark red plush occupies the northern end of the building. A vestibule opens into the auditorium and Sunday School room, and sliding doors separate these two main rooms. At the left of the vestibule is a room which will be used for the various small committee meetings and also as a classroom. Two large colored glass windows with two smaller ones light the auditorium and another large-sized one with one smaller has been placed in the Sunday School room. The choir has been accommodated at the northern end.

"The total cost of the building has exceeded the contractor's price by \$3000, making the figure \$7000. Of this amount, nearly all had been paid; \$800 remained to be raised before the building could be said to be free from debt.

"The amount was raised, and in less than fifteen minutes. Not only the \$800 asked, but \$100 less than twice that amount. In a little speech at the conclusion of the address of Mr. McDonald, a statement of the finances was made by Mr. Ross, and contributions asked toward the amount, with a comprehensive statement of expenditure and the purpose of the fund. The entire sum of \$600 was not asked, but the speaker urged only the pledging of \$300. The ball was started rolling by a contribution of \$50 and when a halt was called the sums of \$50, \$25, \$10, and \$5 ascertained, it was found that the sum had reached \$905. The amount after the service had increased to \$1,100."

Mr. Ross, though apparently very popular, only stayed for two years. The Reverend John McLean, a seminary student, took up the work in the Fall of 1892. It is written about Rev. McLean that "he was a good sermonizer but a poor mixer." The Reverend H.E. Jewett another seminary student, occupied the pulpit frequently until July 1896. During his term the pulpit was often filled by a number of other seminary students for very brief periods each. The following extract from the June 13, 1896 issue of the Vacaville Reporter establishes that our Church participated actively in the commencement exercises of the first Vacaville High School graduation:

"THE FIRST CLASS. THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. The Vacaville Union High School Graduates its first class. On Friday evening last exercises were held in the full church with about seventy five unable to get through the doors. The graduates were Miss Gertrude Jewett, Miss Pearl Brazelton, Frank Marshall and Marion Brazelton. A fine program was presented by the students. The address was given by The Reverend H.E. Jewett."

The pulpit was occupied by Mr. Andrew C. Strauchen in 1896 about whom very little is written. A very brief entry on July 10, 1897 indicates he left the church in at least as good a condition as he found it. "The Reverend G. G. Eldridge was called. The work of the church was going well, as of this report."

The 25th anniversary of our Church was observed on July 16, 1898 with Mr. Eldridge officiating. That observance was described at that time as follows:

"Last Sunday the Presbyterian Church fittingly celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Not in pomp and splendor but in quiet solemn worship, giving thanks to God for his mercy in sustaining the Church through the years that are past. And as the text of the Sermon from the 4th Chapter Joshua indicates, so this church organized 25 years ago stands today as the memorial to the children of the pioneers, who had the courage and good will to organize themselves into a body for public worship and moral influence in our community. And as children should honor their parents so it seemed good that we should this day especially honor those who did the work we could not do. We are glad to notice a few of the charter members of the church are still with us to encourage us to carry on the work they so well began, that the next few years may be marked with still greater success than the past. The Church has during this time suffered from two fires the last time in 1891, the church building was entirely destroyed, after which a larger and more commodious church house (the present one) was erected, and dedicated in the spring of 1892."

Rev. Eldridge left Vacaville in the Spring of 1899 to become Pastor of St. Johns Church in San Francisco. The Reverend John R. Jones was called that year and remained until 1901. Very little is known of the church's activities during that period except for the fact that it was during this time frame that our Church became self-supporting and was no longer a "mission church."

The next minister to serve our Church, The Reverend James Curry, D.D., provided outstanding spiritual leadership for the next 6 years and it is recorded "under whom the work of the Church was carried on thrivingly." Among the records of that period is a report made by Mr. Curry as follows:

"During July and August union services were held on Sabbath evenings in the open air on Main Street which were well attended. Your pastor has delivered 119 sermons and addresses among them being addresses on Memorial Day in the Vacaville Opera House, at the State Christian Endeavor Convention in Santa Rosa, Installation of the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Placerville.

"Delegates from our church have attended the meetings of Synod and Presbytery, the Woman's Presbyterial Missionary Society and the State and County Conventions of the Sabbath School Associations and Christian Endeavor Unions.

"Thus the influence of our church has been extended far beyond the bounds of our own parish."

Our Church has long been recognized as a leader in ecumenical affairs through working diligently for unity and cooperation among all Christian Churches. The following notice that appeared in the March 5, 1904 Vacaville Reporter attests to the validity of that statement:

"The regular monthly meeting of the Minister's Union of Vacaville will be held in the Presbyterian Church on Monday next, March 7, at 10:30 o'clock. A paper will be presented by Mr. James Curry of the Presbyterian Church on "Christ the Example of Ministers." Ministers from neighboring towns are invited to attend and will be entertained. Everyone interested in the subject will be welcome."

Mr. Curry was succeeded by The Reverend H.N. Coontz in 1907 and served until 1910.

The most spectacular recorded event during the term of Mr. Coontz was an exciting, valiant and successful struggle to prevent our Church from again being consumed by fire. On Sunday morning, July 11, 1909, the Hotel Raleigh across the street from the Church burned to the ground. That fire posed a grave threat to our Church building. The following is the newspaper account of that incident as it affected our Church:

"Just across the Parker Street from the burning building stood the Presbyterian Church, one of the handsomest houses of worship in Vacaville. For some time it was believed firemen would not be able to save the church from burning, but they fought with determination and not for a moment were their efforts relaxed. The great heat began to scorch the east side of the church and the water pressure was not sufficient to send a stream to the eaves. The only way to reach the fire was from the roof and Guy Bassett, although not a member of the fire department, George Akerly and C.E. Lawrence mounted the steep roof dragging a line of hose. By this means they kept the roof wet and filling a small bucket with water, Mr. Bassett crept to the edge and dashed water under the eaves, which at one time had begun to blaze.

"A row of trees along the sidewalk were of great service in keeping the heat from the body of the building and it is probably that but for these trees no human effort could have saved the church.



Church after steeple fire in July, 1909

"The steeple, projecting to considerable height, soon began to smoke and blaze. The firemen made every effort to reach this fire, but the water pressure was not sufficient, and people held their breath in fear that after the hard fight of the firemen, the building would yet burn. The firemen, however, only fought the harder for this new danger. Sam Bentley, chief of the fire department, Buck Cline, M.T. Jewell, Frank Costello, and R.R. Beard, the latter not a member of the fire department, worked in the steeple, and finally made their way up into it, and with a small chemical (sic) were able to reach the fire and partly extinguish it.

"The watching crowds breathed a sigh of relief. Had the church burned, it is believed no human agency could have prevented the spread of the flames to the parsonage and from that to other residences, and no one dared venture an opinion as to where the fire would have stopped.

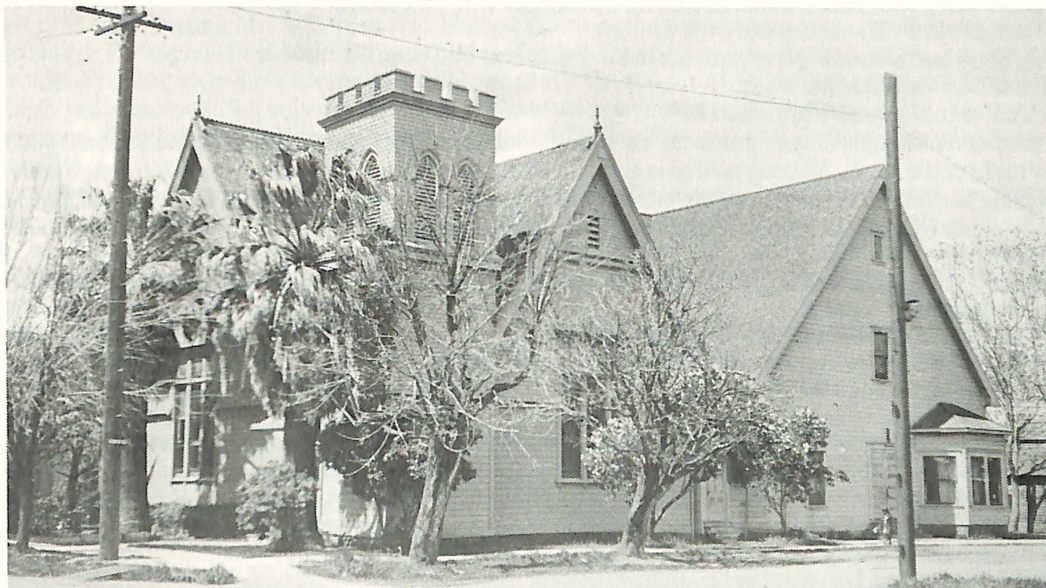
WHY THE STEEPLE WAS REMOVED

"Many people wondered why it was, when the fire had apparently been extinguished, the firemen sawed off the timbers and toppled the steeple into the street. It was because they could not reach the flames to entirely extinguish them and were afraid to

wait for the fire to burn down to a point where they could apply water. They could not climb the interior of the steeple, and any ladder they could use in the close quarters was too short to be of service. Not being able to force the water up to the fire they concluded it best to remove it and run no chances."

A memorable event in the life of our Church, as well as the entire City of Vacaville, was the construction of the church annex in 1912. The April 19 issue of the Vacaville Reporter contained the following article that highlights that event, as well as summarizing the church up to that period.

The new church steadily grew. "To accommodate the growing work and the needs of the community in general, an Annex was added which doubles the capacity of the church proper. This addition is intended not only for the larger church work but affords a place for physical culture and social and literary gatherings for the whole community. There is a large hall which can be a gymnasium and which, with the gallery, will seat some 450 people.



Old church after annex was built - Circa 1912

"There is a commodious stage, boy's room, ladies rest room, lavatories with shower baths for boys and girls, a parlor, a kitchen, cloakroom and lockers. The whole arrangement is exceptionally good. The annex is a great addition to the town and will be of service in many ways. Visitors have much praise.

"The church work includes besides regular Sunday worship, Sunday School, Intermediate and Senior C.E. Society, midweek worship and social service, Ladies Missionary Society, Ladies Aid, Ora et Labora (young ladies society), Knights of King Arthur, and World Scouts. There were 50 members added in the last 16 months. More money for benevolences and missions than ever before.

"Church officers —

Minister — The Reverend Henry A. Fisk

Elders — James C. Weir, Ora E. Merchant, James McCrory, Norman Bethune

Trustees — H.D. Chandler, Ora E. Merchant, C.G. Robinson, Joseph Barnes, James Brightman

Treasurer — Mrs. J.M. Arnold

Sunday School Superintendent — Mrs. H. A. Fisk

Presidents of Auxiliaries —

Missionary Society — Mrs. D.B. Derby

Ladies Aid — Mrs. S.P. Dobbins

Ora et Labora — Miss Marion Weir

Knights of King Arthur — Master Stanley Dobbins

World Scouts Leader — Henry A. Fisk"



Reverend Arthur Fruhling

The Reverend Arthur Fruhling came to serve our Church in 1914 and was to spend virtually his entire career in the service of this Church and the Vaca Valley area. The following brief article in the April 24 issue of the Vacaville Reporter makes the simplest mention of the installation of Mr. Fruhling without the slightest knowledge of the profound influence that young man would have on the life of our Church and the entire community:

"Fruhling installation as pastor of the Presbyterian Church Tuesday evening. The Reverend E.G. Phillip of Sacramento preached the sermon "The More Abundant Life." The Reverend H.C. Culton of Winters gave the charge to the pastor. In the absence of The Reverend Wieman of Davis, The Reverend A.S. Coats of the Baptist Church gave the charge to the people. Elders — R.P. Duff, Norman Bethune, C.G. Robinson, Ora E. Merchant, James C. Weir, and Paul Burke were installed."

An added feature to supplement the church annex facilities was provided through a generous donation that made the March 18, 1918 edition of the Vacaville Reporter as follows:

"A Simplex DeLux Movie Machine a gift of Mrs. J.C. Weir was announced at the Ladies Aid meeting on Thursday. They voted enthusiastically to stand the expense of installation. Films were to be shown Sunday evenings. They were to be religious and educational." The Church Annex was pressed into a very humanitarian service during the flu epidemic of 1918 as the following newspaper article describes:

"RED CROSS HOSPITAL IN ANNEX NOVEMBER 1918"

"Fifty nine patients have been received in Vacaville Red Cross hospital (Presbyterian Church Annex) since it opened on November 1. Thirty dismissed and five died. There are twenty four at the present time. Five professional nurses are in charge with several assistants. The kitchen has five shifts with ten people busy."

"While the Annex was not built with a view of adapting it to its present use, it offered the only solution to the problem which confronted the Red Cross Hospital committee when the sudden emergency necessitated that a hospital be established without delay, and while many inconveniences exist, it is serving the purpose well."

"At a hospital committee meeting Mrs. B.F. Fields became acting chairman on the illness of Mrs. F.B. McKevitt. Miss Olga Johnson of San Francisco in charge of day nurses and Mrs. M. Tornburg of San Francisco in charge of the night force. The number of patients could be thirty two. There would be a strict quarantine with no visitors."

"Dr. W.C. Jenny and Dr. M.P. Stansbury were the doctors."

"On Nov. 22, 1918, there had been sixty five patients in all. Forty four had been dismissed."

"The Hospital was closed the following week."

"This was at the time of the Spanish Flu epidemic."

After the flu crisis had passed, the annex immediately reverted to its role as Sunday School on the Sabbath and a community hall virtually every night of the week. An unidentified individual wrote the following comment about the annex activities:

"Every winter during basketball season, until the advent of the high school gym in 1930, both the town and high school basketball teams played to capacity crowds in the annex. The rafters resounded with the cheers of the crowd in the balcony and the stage."

"Many local thespians of the town and high school theatrical groups first trod the boards of the annex stage as the names on the old wings and back curtain could testify."

"The Saturday Club, American Legion Boy and Girl Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Lions Club, and other organizations too numerous to mention were among the groups that used the stage and annex, along with the church youth groups, Sunday School, and ladies groups through the years."

Almost on the heels of the flu epidemic and the Armistice of World War I, most all of the churches in Vacaville were to suffer severe distress. A by-product of that distress brought about the first change in the name of our Church. In fact, external denominational identification virtually ceased to exist for a few years. The following article from the June 10, 1921 Vacaville Reporter tells the story of the subordination of denominational identification of the part of several churches in the interest of preserving an effective means of teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in unity and harmony:

"Community Church Holds First Service, Declaration of Principles Read."

"It aims to demonstrate the Christian Unity of the Spirit and Brotherhood of Believers."

"The congregations of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Christian Churches which recently decided to cooperate under the name of the Community Church of Vacaville, assembled in the Presbyterian Church, last Sunday morning for their first service. Instead of a sermon, several short addresses were made and the following declaration of principle was read."

NAME

"This organization shall be known as the Community Church of Vacaville."

OBJECT

"1. The object of said Cooperation is to coordinate the activities and services of the respective congregations in order to prevent needless duplication and harmful rivalry of effort, to demonstrate in the larger measure the Christian Unity of the Spirit, and to serve Community and humanity more efficiently, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"2. The Community Church aims to function independently of the denominations, yet in cooperation with them. Denominational organization property, interests, requirements and benevolent obligations are to be fully respected. Membership in the Community Church does not interfere with membership in any denomination. On the other hand, one does not need to be a member of a denomination in order to become a member of the Community Church."

"3. The Church recognized religion as a universal fact and attitude of life instead of a dogma, and as an indispensable common need, like love and sunshine. We impose upon our members, no formal confession of faith, but seek to stimulate each and everyone to form his own carefully considered convictions thru untrammelled investigation and faithful practice."

"4. Until a constitution and by-laws are adopted, the officers of the three congregations, parties to the agreement, will constitute the Governing Board of the Community Church."

The fact that harmony and unity was actually achieved is supported by the following article in the April 13, 1923 issue of the Reporter:

COMMUNITY CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

"A spirit of happiness, helpfulness, and hopefulness prevailed the atmosphere of the Community Church annual meeting, Wednesday evening. Previous to the general meeting, the denominations comprising the Community Church met to transact business, adjourning to the Annex at 8:15. The reports were encouraging. Refreshments were enjoyed."

"Reports by Mrs. Watts, Miss Saxton, Mrs. Blake, and Mr. A.F. Fruhling on the advantages of the Union whose organization will be complete next year."

This was the only time the church had two ministers. Mr. A.F. Fruhling, who had been pastor since 1913 was assisted by Dr. A.C. Coats for a time. The record is rather vague during the several years of reincorporation and the consolidation of the Baptist, Christian, and Presbyterian Churches into the Community Presbyterian Church."

On April 21, 1924, the congregation of the Community Presbyterian Church met to consider the proposed constitution drawn by the committees from the three churches that was chosen to draft same. Mr. Fruhling acted as chairman. The constitution was presented and brought to a vote item-by-item. Then the constitution as a whole was adopted. The Community Presbyterian Church came into being."

The 50th anniversary of the church was observed in 1923. Mr. James C. Weir gave a history of the church as he remembered it. Mr. Weir, in his talk on the 50th anniversary of the church said of Mr. Fruhling, "It is needless to comment, only to say he is doing good work here and is building up a Community Church more successfully than had been done before." About this time, Mrs. Frank Buck, Sr., left money to be used for renovation of the church. A choir loft, choir room, and small Sunday School room were added to the west side of the church. New pews and paint were other improvements. Even though Mr. Fruhling, Mr. James

Brightman and other members did much of the work, the Ladies Aid had to help with finances. Pastor Fruhling's wife had died and a suitable memorial was proposed. The members, with the Ladies Aid leading the way, decided on a stained glass window to be put in the wall behind the pulpit. Hoffman's head of Christ, a favorite of Mrs. Fruhling, was chosen and soon installed. (That memorial is the only visible structural item moved to our new church.)

In the late 30's the session was apprised of the opportunity to buy the pipe organ in the Vacaville Theater. The price set for the organ seemed favorable. The Ladies Aid had maintained a memorial fund for some time and they volunteered to turn over the funds toward the purchase. Certain other contributions and resources made it possible to purchase the instrument which brought much enjoyment to the congregation through the years. A Memorial Fund was continued for the upkeep of the instrument which was made by the William Wood Co., of Portland, Oregon. The pipes of that organ are the ones you listen to every Sunday.

The records tell us that Mr. Fruhling and Mr. Ed H. McMillan attended a regular meeting of Presbytery in Red Bluff on January 22, 1931. At that meeting Mr. McMillan was elected as one of the Commissioners to the General Assembly that was to convene in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in May. Ed was followed in that capacity several years later by Jim McCrory and still later by Pat Clarno. Mr. Fruhling closed his career as a minister of our Church for 43 years with retirement in 1956; that retirement being exceedingly well deserved. Not only did Mr. Fruhling have an active interest in our church, but community affairs as well; The Scout movement, Youth Council, which was the beginning of the City Recreation Program, slum clearance in old Jap Town, and many, many other projects.

The Reverend Henry MacFadden came to our church in 1956 from Placerville. The latter part of the 1950's was a period of rapid growth for Vacaville and with that growth there were several new churches established in Vacaville. During that period the uniting of two of the major elements of the Presbyterian Church at the national level brought about another change in the name of our Church to the name it now carries — Community United Presbyterian Church of Vacaville. That name preserves all of the significant elements of its long history.

The period was also a time when a major decision had to be made regarding the church structure — either invest in a total rehabilitation and remodeling, or acquire property and construct a new church. The ultimate conclusion is obvious; new property was acquired at Eldridge and Hemlock and the old property sold to Safeway Stores who also purchased all the other property on the block.

November 16, 1958 was the climax of a year-long series of events celebrating the 85th anniversary of our Church. A very well attended family dinner followed by a dramatic presentation of historic events in the life of our Church, was the event. The last service in the old Church was held May 27, 1962, marking over 70 years of weddings, baptisms, funerals, worship services, sports activities, movies, dinners, and countless community services.



Last Easter Sunday at old church - April 1962.
Note annex and new entry.

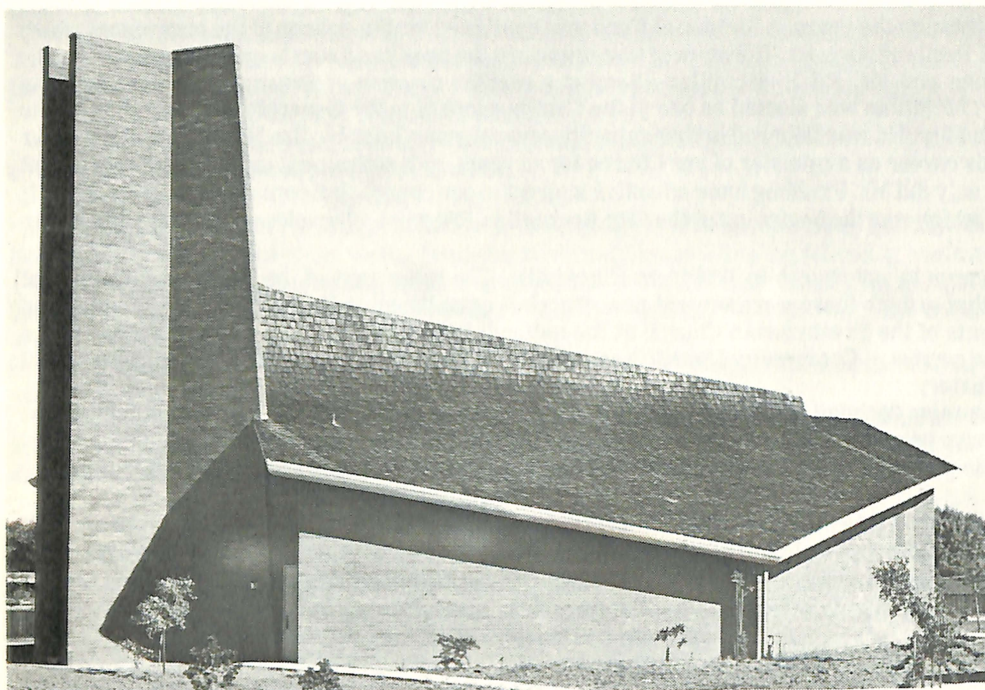
There was a period of several months when we had no church of our own during which time the Saturday Club was used as a sanctuary and Sunday School classes were conducted at several locations. The master plan for utilizing our new property had been adopted, an architect selected and bids accepted for construction, and financing arranged for the sanctuary and education building we now occupy. The dedication of our new Church was conducted on Sunday, October 13, 1963 at 4:00 P.M. The Session



Ground-breaking for church at Hemlock & Eldredge, 1963. L—R - Carl Fisher, George Fruhling, Jim McCrory, Rev. Henry MacFadden Willa Scheafer, Whitson Cox, Warren Prall and Arnold Clark.

and congregation at that time were confident that it would be necessary to construct an addition that would link the education building to the sanctuary, as well as build the second unit of Christian educational facilities within a few years.

It is extremely unfortunate that Mr. Fruhling, who had been Pastor Emeritus since his retirement did not live to see the new church. We are confident that he would have been pleased with the one visible architectural item brought from the old church — the stained glass head of the Christ Memorial of the first Mrs. Fruhling. The invisible, but very audible item brought from the old church, was the splendid pipes from the old church pipe organ.



Newly built Community United
Presbyterian Church - 1963

W. Warren Prall, TH.D., came to assist as a Parish visitor working primarily with military families assigned to Travis AFB, but living in Vacaville and Fairfield. He also served as a very effective choir director. Dr. Prall retired and died suddenly shortly afterward.

Mr. MacFadden was largely responsible for reactivation of the Vacaville Ministerial Association. The United Presbyterian Women's Group was organized during that period and which absorbed the Ladies Aid and SDB Clubs. A book could be written about the years of service of those clubs to our Church and community. The Men's Club and Couple's Club (later to become the Spares and Pairs Club) came into being prior to Rev. MacFadden's retirement in the Summer of 1968. Mr. MacFadden's skills as a leader were confirmed by his being elected as Moderator of the Synod of California in 1955.

The Reverend Leo Nelson from the Hawthorne California Church was called to take up the work at that time and take up the work he did! He promptly set about establishing a fund for landscaping the Church grounds and never missed a work party doing the planting. A well was dug to irrigate the grounds and the wrought iron sign was designed, fabricated, and donated by one of our members; the lighting for which was donated by another. Two very popular and thought-provoking portions of Mr. Nelson's services are the Children's Meditation and Informal Dialog with the Pastor. One of his works not so widely known is with a high school age group in his home every Sunday night.

The Dorcas Circle (the younger women's group) was added to the United Presbyterian Women and undertook establishing a PEP School for preschoolers. A new grand piano was purchased through special contributions.

Through Christian Prayer and Service, the Community United Presbyterian Church of Vacaville is completing 100 years of discipleship in this community. The ministers, composed of the congregation, with Pastor Nelson, have committed themselves to the continuation of Christ's work and to plan for the future with confidence.



Ladies Groups

LADIES AID

The Ladies Aid was active almost from the very first.

Rummage sales and Bazaars were held to raise money.

Several cook books were published of favorite and special recipes of members and friends of the church.

Election day dinners and dinners for many different groups were profitable. Dinners for the Commandry were prepared each month for thirteen years.

Funds derived from these activities were used for roofing, painting and other upkeep of the manse and church building. Pew and chair cushions were recovered.

The Ladies Aid funds helped the church through many rough times.

The ladies maintained a memorial fund for many years and when the Theater organ became available for purchase, they donated their funds to that purchase.

They, also, paid for the installation of the Movie Machine that Mrs. Weir donated to be used in the Annex. These are only a few of the many ways that the Ladies Aid served this church during their many years.

Along with their work there were many very close friendships made and much Christian fellowship enjoyed.

LADIES MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Missionary Society had many interesting programs in the church parlors. They held an annual tea with informative plays, etc., to learn about the missionary field.

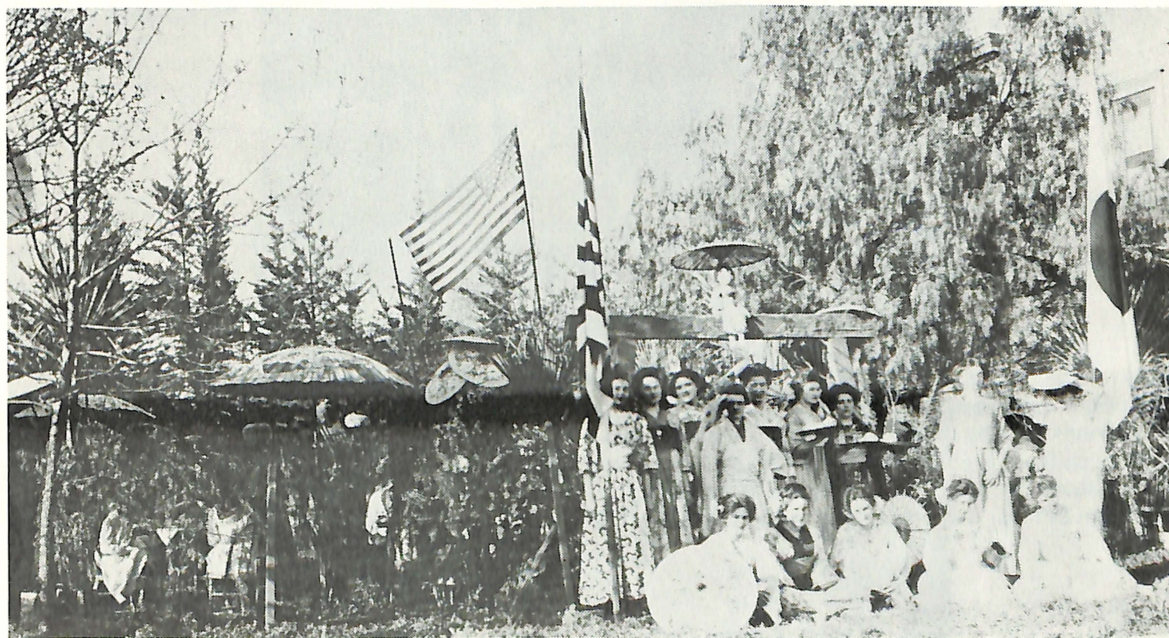
A freewill offering was usually taken to meet its annual apportionment for missions.

The annual rose tea was combined with the strawberry festival, May 23, 1903. Roses, ice cream, and strawberries while the band played.

ORA ET LABORA

(Talk and Work)

February 16, 1912 the young ladies of the Church met to organize the Ora et Labora. Mrs. Henry A. Fisk was the organizer. Miss Marion Weir was elected president. They would have projects that benefited the community as well as the church.



An elaborate Japanese tea was held in the area between the church and the manse. The young ladies dressed in costume. Small tables were used with Japanese parasols and both a large Japanese flag and an American flag.

The money gained was used to furnish tables, chairs, rug, and other necessities for a Sunday School room.

A Carnival of Nations, another activity, was held in the Opera House. Booths with goodies of different nations were manned by young ladies in the costume of the country.

January 29, 1915, the Labora Club was reorganized at the home of Mrs. J.W. (Velma) Wirt. It was decided that they would cooperate with the owners of vacant lots and help make Vacaville Beautiful.

S.D.B. Club

In about 1934, the Stocking Darners' Bible Class was organized by Mrs. Lemoine Williams (Thelma), wife of the High School Superintendent.

The Sunday morning Bible Class was small and it was thought that a weekday afternoon meeting might bring out a better attendance.

Thelma said "Come on over and bring your stockings to darn." Thus the group grew.

The name was shortened to S.D.B. Club and then changed to Seek To Do Better Club but that didn't last. It was easier to say S.D.B. Club so that is what it was known as most of the time.

Many fund raising projects were carried out. Dinners were served for many organizations including Lions, Chamber of Commerce, P.T.A., Prune Growers and many more.

Nearly every fall there were bazaars in the Annex. Lovely articles were made for sale. Food was sold as well as complete lun-

ches or dinners. Some times both.

Both the S.D.B. Club and the Ladies Aid entered booths in the Flower Show at the May Day Fair at Dixon and often won prizes.

The Spring Festivals were really fun. They were of many varieties. Fashion Shows and Spring Teas were lovely. Each festival had a different theme, the Pan American one was long remembered.

The Cow Town Capers, a historical pageant of Vacaville, was so well received that it was given two different years and when the town celebrated its centennial, the pageant was used as a guide.

The Club, also, sponsored "Breakfast with Jane Lee" in the Annex and then another year at the Nut Tree. It was the first radio broadcast originating in Vacaville.

The money from all these events was used for church renovation Sunday School equipment, Christmas Baskets and to help several students with scholarships.

All this as well as Christian fellowship and service.

This group was active until 1959, when the United Presbyterian Women was organized.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The United Presbyterian Women was formed on October 22, 1959 with three circles. One morning, one afternoon, and one evening. The S.D.B. Club and the Ladies Aid were both absorbed into this group.

PURPOSE OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Seeking to be obedient to God's call in Jesus Christ, we unite: to support the mission of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. To help one another to grow in Christian Faith and understanding, and to act in Christian concern in the company of God's people everywhere.

We shall seek too implement this purpose by study, prayer and service, supporting with our giving the work of the Church and its missions.



First officers of United Presbyterian Women - 1959

Several lovely teas were held. One for Mrs. MacFadden and one for Mrs. Nelson were of special note.

Wedding receptions have been catered as the principal money making effort as with loyal pledging it hasn't been necessary to spend time with money making.

Sunday morning coffee is prepared every Sunday. A flower committee oversees the flowers for the sanctuary each Sunday.

A centennial cookbook has been prepared by the Dorcas Circle.

Circles include the Dorcas, Esther, Martha, Miriam and Ruth Circles.

Memorial Fund

By action of the session, a Memorial Fund has been established through which gifts to the church may be made in meomory of loved ones. Undesignated gifts will be used by the church for a yet to be decided upon memorial. Designated gifts will be used for specific purposes as agreed upon between the session and the families concerned.

A Memorial Fund has been set up in the name of the late Arthur F. Fruhling who gave almost half a century of service to this church and community as pastor and pastor emeritus. This fund will be set aside for a social hall to be known as Fruhling Hall.

Memorial gifts may be made through the church treasury; the gift will be acknowledged to the donor and information of receipt of gift but not the amount, sent to the family concerned.

Pulpit furniture, pews, windows, hymn books, cross and candle holders, and other elements of the sanctuary furnishings have been provided largely through the Memorial Fund to which many have contributed over the years in the name of many loved ones.

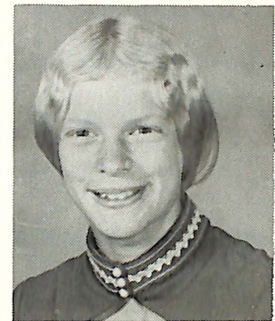
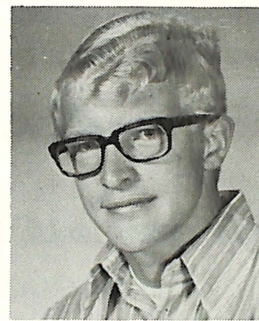
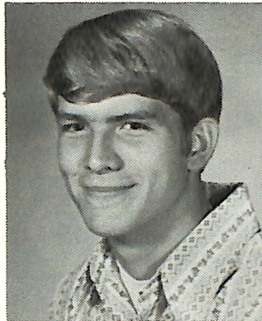


Hoffman's Head of Christ
In memory of Cecelia Charlotte Fruhling



Leo and Jean Nelson

The Nelson Family



Keith, Mark and Karen

Pastor Nelson's Centennial Comments

Compared to the age of the church, I am a "Johnnie-come-lately," therefore, anything I say must be colored by the fact that I can only make an educated guess at the past. But then, is the past all that important? Certainly it is! Without the faithful builders of the past none of the goings on of the present would be possible. 100th Anniversary Celebrations help us to relive a past which is precious and important. They should also cause us to remember that we are now building the foundations of some future anniversary celebration.

What will those people say of us? We can say of the old-timers of this current anniversary celebration that they began to build and continued to build well. Shall we work and serve and build so that some other committee down the road 100 years or so can say they too began to build and finished well? What of the future? Our church will continue to be a gathering point where concerned Christians go out into the community and serve their Lord. We will grow in size of course — more building will be erected — membership will increase. We will continue to provide a ministry of compassion and concern, a ministry of leadership in a growing community and a place where people may come to find peace of mind and rest for their souls.

All right now! Who is ready for tomorrow?



Pastors of the Presbyterian Church of Vacaville

Organized July 12, 1873, First Presbyterian Church of Vacaville, by The Reverend Thomas Frasier, Synodical Missionary of the Synod of the Pacific.

Seminary students supplied the pulpit until 1876.

The Reverend A.J. Compton, installed in 1876 served until 1879.

The Reverend Robert Ballagh 1879-1882.

The Reverend John D. Beard 1882-1887.

The Reverend F.J. Edwards 1888-1890.

The Reverend Donald M. Ross 1890-1892.

The Rev. John N. McLean 1892-1896.

The Reverend H.E. Jewett served temporarily during Rev. McLean's time.

The Reverend A.C. Strachen 1896-1897. The Reverend Warren H. Laudon, D.D. served temporarily.

The Reverend John J. Eldridge 1897-1899.

The Reverend John R. Jones 1899-1901.

The Reverend James Curry, D.D. 1901-1907.

The Reverend H.N. Coontz 1907-1910.

The Reverend Henry Fisk 1910-1913.

The Reverend A.F. Fruhling 1913-1956.

The Reverend Henry B. MacFadden 1956-1968.

The Reverend Leo Nelson 1968-

Some of the Early Elders

Robert Simpson

O.J. Bingham

J.B. Robinson

James C. Weir

Sam Creighton

Dr. H.P. Stipp

James McCrory

Mr. Bethune

George Gall

Andrew S. McKay

Robert Brook

James Koford

Mr. Walker

Cio Haines

Mr. Paul Burk

Mr. Merchant

Ed H. McMillan

MARCH-1973-JULY
Centennial Committee
Virgil Haggard - Chairman. Writer of Text.
Walter Weir Julia Brekme.
Bette Lenoard

Dorothy & Arthur H. Dietz
Writer and Research and Photos for Historical Display
at Church Anniversary Dinner.

This Copy presented to
George Sabean
March 1977
Arthur H. Dietz

